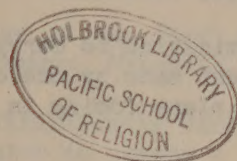


#517 May 13, 1977

IN THIS ISSUE:

A Christian Amidst Struggle in Narita
Korean Women in Japan
Inter-Faith Dialogue
Church Briefs



A Christian Amidst Struggle
TOMURA ISAKU OF SANRIZUKA

TOMURA Isaku has been invited by the Christian Conference of Asia to its meeting in Penang, Malaysia to give testimony about a Christian's experience in the midst of the Narita struggle.

Narita is back in the news. Front-page headlines and TV coverage over the weekend of May 6-8 began with the forced removal of the two steel-frame towers which had been the symbol of the Farmer's Opposition Movement against the construction and opening of the New International Airport at Narita (approximately 70 kilometers north-east of Tokyo). This surprise move by the Airport Authority, backed by the deployment of over two thousand five hundred riot troops, began at 3:00 a.m. on the morning of May 6, catching the opposition forces completely off guard. Telephone and communications were cut and the few defenders in the main tower were removed before any help could be summoned. By the time opposition farmers and supporting students began to arrive within the following hour, the area was completely blocked off by phalanxes of *kidotai* (riot police) behind their shiny duralumin shields. All attempts to break through the *kidotai* barriers failed, and by 11:02 a.m., the large 62-meter tower was brought crashing to the ground.

The following day, no longer hampered by the two opposition towers along the approachway to the 4000 meter runway, a single YS-11 became the first plane to land at the airport to begin flight check-in preparation for the often postponed opening of the new airport now scheduled for November this year. At its first cabinet meeting in January 1977, the Fukuda administration had set this date as its top domestic priority. Since the formation of the New Tokyo International Airport Authority in 1965, each forceful requisition of property was followed by an escalation of violent confrontation with opposition farmers who were joined by supporting students and eventually a host of citizens' groups.

Angered by the secretive and legally questionable tactics of the Airport Authority in its sudden removal of the two towers, some 3,700 supporters gathered near the airport for a rally, which resulted in a number of scattered head-on clashes between students and riot troops. Injuries ran into the hundreds as the riot police responded to hurled rocks and molotov cocktails by firing tear-gas shells point-blank into the demonstrators. One demonstrator later died after having his skull smashed when hit by a police tear gas shell while treating others injured.

The chairman of the Farmer's Opposition League since its formation in 1966 is TOMURA Isaku, age 68. Named after Isaac in the Old Testament, Tomura is a third generation Christian and resident of Sanrizuka (now part of Narita City) who has gained national prominence for his leadership in the local farmer's struggle. He

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is also well-known as an artist and writer. His art and writing for the past 12 years has given creative expression to this struggle. His most recent metal sculpture exhibited last fall at the annual Nika Exhibition entitled "Sanrizuka: In Memoriam," was almost a prophecy of what has happened.

The determination to carry on the struggle against overwhelming odds was reflected in a comment made by one of the farmers to an *Asahi Shimbun* reporter as he watched the first plane coming in for a landing: "They can't knock down the tower in our hearts."

The importance of the Sanrizuka-Narita struggle cannot be underestimated in the history of citizen's movements in Japan. This could be visibly seen at the last major mass rally held Sunday, April 17, at Sanrizuka to protest the forceful disposition of the towers. With over 5000 riot police on alert, some 280 citizens' groups from Hokkaido to Okinawa joined in solidarity with the opposition farmers as the estimated 20,000 participants carried colorful banners and flags along the road winding around the two towers. The procession took over four hours to pass in front of the main tower and included many young couples with children along with a number of handicapped persons in wheelchairs.

At dusk, Tomura walked up the narrow land which was the only public access left to the main tower. Climbing up to the platform he appealed to the *kidotai* who were surrounding the tower on all sides. Tomura began asking about who owns the earth under the pavement where they were standing. The earth, he said, is still there under the concrete runway and stretching clear around the globe. "The land is not something that anyone can give or take, but it is something that was created by the Creator of all things and cannot be destroyed without paying the consequences." That was one of Tomura's last appeals from the tower.

In an interview published on the front page of the *Mainichi Shimbun*, Tomura commented that he had often appealed to the *kidotai*, trying to gain their support, and had even received New Year's Greeting from members of the riot police. But the stealthy actions by the combined forces of the government, police and courts in the middle of the night in complete violation of personal property had dashed his hopes. He said that on the day when they knocked the tower down he felt for the first time that it was natural to kill the riot troops. When asked if this was not contradictory to the teaching of Jesus to "Love your enemies," he said that he was not an absolutist and was always groping for alternatives. But the 12 years of struggle had taught him the necessity of making words clear which had resulted in "striking down the enemy." We are fighting a struggle of self-defense which is always a disadvantage to being on the attack. From now on we are going to strike back in solidarity with other citizens movements."

Even with the removal of the towers, there are many obstacles to operating the airport on a regular basis. Inadequate jet fuel supply routes, lack of rapid transit to Tokyo, no progress on noise prevention measures, and the issue of energy waste in travelling the 70 kilometers to and from the airport. With almost \$1 billion of tax money already down the drain and an additional \$100,000 in interest being paid each day, the day may come when an enlightened administration may be forced to admit the folly of the original project and take a more practical as well as humane approach as suggested by Tomura. "I am not against an airport," he said. "But I oppose the evil government that drives farmers off their fertile land. If Haneda, which faces the ocean, were expanded, wouldn't that solve the problem?"

-George GISH

KOREAN WOMEN IN JAPAN

by SHIN Young Ja
Korean Christian
Church in Japan

The following are excerpts taken from an address to be given at the first Women's Forum of the Christian Conference of Asia, May 25-29 in Penang, Malaysia.

When Christianity came to Korea the pietism in American Christianity came into confluence with the thought orientations of old Confucianism to create a climate in which women came to be despised and men revered. Thus it became the common moral code that to be a good Christian meant being a good wife in the home, being obedient to the pastor and the elders in the church and obedient to God in all ways.

The storm of imperialism that came to Korea along with Christianity strengthened the oppression of women. Many women were massacred and tortured during the March First Independence Movement.

The yokes and chains of oppression which bind us Korean women in a two fold or three fold interlocking system can never be changed until we break our fetters with our own hands.

Bitter Experiences What then has been the lifestyle of Korean women in Japan? Most of these women came to Japan long after their husbands were taken away from them to be used in the labor pools of Japan's imperial conspiracy. Since many of these women, separated from their husbands, did not have a chance for education under the imperial rule of Japan's colonial authorities, they had little communication with their husbands across the sea. Needless to say, many of the conjugal reunions did not result in happiness. Our generation will never forget these bitter experiences of our mothers and grandmothers, for because of poverty, illiteracy and the differences in cultural heritage, these women had to bear the brunt of excessive Japanese prejudice. When we, second and third generation Korean women, were young, our total experience was seeing our mothers burdened with deep sorrow. As a result, we also began to curse our own fate.

When we grew up and became mothers, we began to deal with the problems of bringing up our own children in this society and began to awaken to a new self identity. We are determined that our own children will be spared the experiences that we had in our early days. We no longer pretend to be Japanese in order to have an easier life and we can now affirm pride in our Korean background. We have come to realize that this is the only way to teach our children to live. This is a kind of revolution. Now young mothers are seeking to achieve what our ancestors were not able to achieve during the 36 years of Japanese colonization and the 30 years following that.

Chauvinism in the Church "What place or institution in this world is furthest removed from the systems of oppression and discrimination?" I would like to answer "It is the Church," but I am sorry to say that such an answer is simply not possible. As I mentioned before, pietistic American missionaries in the early years of Christianity in Korea were not really confronted with the depths of Confucianism. These missionaries encouraged Korean Christians to obey authority and that obedience was thought to be a virtue. As a result, this same system of male chauvinism has become firmly entrenched in church structures. Unfortunately, this tradition was carried over into the Korean

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Christian Church in Japan and exists as a reality even today. The ordination of women has not been recognized in the KCCJ but two thirds of the constituency of that church are women. We women can neither vote or join the decision making process even in the smallest of meetings just as we cannot become pastors and elders.

I must admit that I am partly responsible for this state of affairs since I have looked upon this morally wrong system in our own church without acting to correct the situation while at the same time listening to the message of liberation as expressed by Christ in that same church. Women are however now beginning a struggle in the church and through this struggle we have come to realize that:

Jesus Christ always stands on the side of the oppressed and the weak. In this respect, we must fully understand the implications of Christ's teachings about the cost of discipleship as expressed in Luke 12:49, 51 and in Matthew 10:34.

We must be honest in expressing our anger. We must overcome prejudice that is rooted in fear and ignorance by the infusion of abundant love and enlightenment. Thus we can share the joy of genuine faith with people the world over.

One of the most important tasks ahead of us is establishing our self-identity. We must realize that we offend the Spirit of God by despising ourselves because we are women.

If theology has a real role in developing a genuine faith, perhaps new theology will be born through the struggle of the KCCJ women who are oppressed. I believe that our struggle is deeply rooted in the great hope that we have for the future.

When Koreans in Japan are able to awaken and liberate themselves from their oppression this will awaken and change the Japanese which in turn will help Japanese to recover their selfhood in order to work for their own liberation as they fight to throw off the yoke of oppression. And with this kind of reaction there will be a linkage of liberation that will continue to the ends of the earth.

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Theological Implications
INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE

by Notto R. THELLE

The Buddhist-Christian dialogue in Japan is presently in a stage of development and growth. Several Christian institutions and individuals have contributed to the deepening of the dialogue, through scholarly study, through friendship and cooperation with Buddhists, and also through entering the world of meditation as Christian pilgrims into Buddhist spirituality. And there is no doubt that many of the Christians who are grappling with Buddhism, enter a process in which their Christian faith and experience undergo profound changes.

Looking Back The time seems ripe for a thoroughgoing theological evaluation of what has been done. How far have we come? What is the purpose and basis of the dialogue? How can we deepen the dialogue and seek new orientations?

On April 2-4, 1977, fifteen Catholics and Protestants came together in the Jesuit Retreat Center, Shakuji, Tokyo, in order to come to grips with some of the basic problems of the dialogue. The meeting was the first in a series of bi-annual study meetings of the so-called Ecumenical Group for the Study of Inter-faith Dialogue. The group is co-sponsored by the NCC Center for the Study of

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Japanese Religions, and three Catholic study centers, the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, Institute for the study of Oriental Religions of Sophia University and Oriens Institute for Religious Research. The members of the group are all Christians who have been active in interfaith dialogue,

The first meeting aimed at a historical investigation of the Buddhist-Christian dialogue in Japan, and included preliminary discussions of the question: Why are we actually engaged in dialogue with Buddhists, and what is happening with us in the encounter? The Protestant theologian KITAMORI Kazo and the Jesuit Father William JOHNSTON presented their viewpoints about the encounter between Buddhism and Christianity, based on their dialogue with Pure Land Buddhism and Zen respectively, and the present writer gave a historical outline of Buddhist-Christian relations over the last hundred years.

Twenty years More? It is impossible to give an outline of the discussions but a few points may indicate the concerns of the group.

First of all, several of the participants questioned whether it is possible at this stage to reach any creative conclusions about the theological implications of the dialogue. One tends to think that interfaith dialogue is something that happens at conferences, when e.g. the World Council of Churches arranges a "dialogue conference," or when a representative of the Vatican meets representatives of other religions. Such arrangements are important as steps in a process, or as symbolic expressions of the necessity of community and dialogue, but seldom penetrate below the surface. A dialogue on the depth level is possible only through direct contact with the spiritual experience of Buddhism. "Maybe after 20 or 30 years one can grasp the true implications of the dialogue."

Liberation from European Theology Another point which was stressed was that the effort to dialogue with Buddhists, is not primarily done in order to develop a Japanized form of Christianity. It is rather the opposite, to discover the *universality* of Christianity. The dialogue with Buddhism and Eastern spirituality can help us to rediscover that Christianity is a universal faith which should be liberated from the provincialism of European theology.

One thought-provoking tendency in the Buddhist-Christian dialogue is the fact that Christians through the dialogue often enter a process which changes their attitudes and theological outlooks, while Buddhists, even though they are very open and tolerant, do not seem to take even one step outside their philosophical basis. This could be interpreted critically as a sign of Christian weakness, but perhaps it should rather be seen as a promising sign: Christians have a believing openness to the guidance of the Spirit.

Because the experience and actual concerns of the participants were so varied, it was difficult to reach a common approach, and one did not want to reach any conclusion at the present stage. However, the participants experienced a living fellowship, and shared the conviction that Buddhism represents a radical challenge to the Christian church.

This study will be continued for two or three years, including one session in which the Buddhists who have been engaged in the dialogue with Christians, will be invited to present their evaluation of the dialogue.

CHURCH BRIEFS

NCC Executive Committee Decisions of last April 14th meeting were:

- * to observe the fourth Ecumenical Sunday on Pentecost Sunday May 29 on the theme "Jesus Christ in Asian Suffering and Hope," remembering the sixth CCA Assembly to be held in Penang, Malaysia;
- * to organize a Holy Land and Europe Study Tour in November this year for 16 days at a cost of approximately ¥519,000 per person;
- * to establish a GDR (East Germany) relations committee to initiate official ties with the Federation of Protestant Churches of that country;
- * to make efforts to increase the number of associate member bodies as well as member churches;
- * to co-sponsor a symposium on the rights of Korean residents in Japan on Nov. 21-23, participants being proposed to be 10 each from NCC, Korean Church in Japan, Catholic Commission on Justice and Peace, leaders from Korea, specialists and staff and other observers.
- * to hold the fourth Korea-Japan Church Consultation on Nov. 24-26.

Prime Minister Fukuda suddenly visited Yasukuni Shrine on April 21. Two years ago when then Prime Minister MIKI worshipped at the Shrine, Christians and other religious bodies as well as the opposition parties protested severely. The protest included a 48-hour hunger strike by Christians. This time Fukuda's move was detected by no one. NCC Committee on Yasukuni Problem was one of many Christian organizations which sent protest telegram to the PM, saying the visit to the problematic Yasukuni Shrine violates the constitutional principle of separation of religion and state.

Catholic Commission on Justice and Peace held a press conference April 26, on the occasion of the state visit of President and Mrs. Ferdinand Marcos, raising issue about Japan's export of pollution industry (esp. Kawasaki Steel Mill Co.) and the Philippine government's cooperation with it at the cost of people's suffering. It received rather wide coverage in Japan's major newspapers.

Anabaptist Center was opened April 1 in Suginamiku, Tokyo (Tel. 03-311-4277), for the purpose of "study of the heritage of Anabaptism, its application to today's world, and to realize its ideals." The most prominent scholar on Anabaptism in Japan, SAKAKIBARA Iwao is among the members of the board along with Mennonite pastors and missionaries. Opening of the Freedman Memorial Library which has 3,000 books on Anabaptism open to the public, establishment of lectureships, providing lodging and meeting rooms are among its initial activities. On May 14 and 15 Dr. Gordon Kaufman of Harvard Divinity School will lecture on "Christian Theology and Modernization of Religions" and "What Sort of God" at the Center.

The Federation of Evangelical Churches in the Kyodan (Kyodan Fukuinshugi Kyokai Rengo) had its inauguration April 28 and 29 at Shinagawa Church Tokyo. (See JCAN #514 March 25, 1977). To date 13 congregations became members with 14 congregations expressing their support without becoming members. The Federation approved its constitution with its preamble criticising the present Kyodan postures, nominated 12 members as moderators, established 8 standing committees, approved a 15 million yen budget, and elected George HANABUSA, former Kyodan general secretary, as its general secretary. Dr. CHO (Takeda) Kiyoko, former WCC president, was a guest speaker.